

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SJA-01 IO-13  
EB-07 OMB-01 /081 W

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O R 201553Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4177  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS  
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS  
AMCONSUL BREMEN  
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
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AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GW  
SUBJECT: BUNDESTAG OPENS DEBATE ON FRG POLICY STATE-  
MENT  
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REFS: (A) BONN 21122; (B) BONN 21238;  
(C) BONN 21269

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN AN ALL-DAY DEBATE ON THE COA-  
LITION'S NEW POLICY STATEMENT, THE BUNDESTAG PARTIES

HELD AN EXCHANGE THAT WAS MEATY AND AT TIMES HEATED.  
THE SINGLE MOST NEURALGIC POINT OF DISPUTE WAS THE  
SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM.

DEBATE ON THE  
POLICY STATEMENT RESUMES ON JANUARY 19. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EIGHTH GERMAN BUNDESTAG BEGAN ITS SUBSTANTIVE  
WORK ON DECEMBER 17, WITH AN ALL-DAY DEBATE ON THE FRG  
POLICY STATEMENT (REFS). THIS DEBATE WAS A SOLID, NON-  
DRAMATIC PRELUDE TO THE MORE DETAILED EXCHANGE WHICH  
WILL BEGIN WHEN THE BUNDESTAG RECONVENES ON JANUARY 19.  
ALL PARTIES FEATURED THEIR MAJOR SPEAKERS. DESPITE THE  
INEVITABLE POLEMICS, A NOTE OF CONCILIATION -- A  
QUALIFIED WILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER ON THE BIG  
ISSUES -- RAN THROUGH MOST OF THEIR SPEECHES.

3. THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT OFFERED MANY  
TARGETS: ITS LENGTH AND LACK OF NEW SUBSTANCE MADE IT  
FAR EASIER TO ATTACK THAN TO DEFEND. BOTH THE COALITION  
AND THE OPPOSITION PARTIES SEEMED TO SENSE THIS POINT.  
SPD AND FDP SPEAKERS MADE A MODEST EFFORT TO BUTTRESS  
THE STATEMENT, BUT DWELT MAINLY ON THE CDU/CSU SCHISM  
AND THE OPPOSITION'S FAILURE TO OFFER ALTERNATIVE  
SOLUTIONS. THE CDU/CSU, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAMMERED  
AWAY AT MOST PARTS OF THE POLICY STATEMENT, WITH THEIR  
MAIN ATTACK ON THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROBLEM WHICH WILL  
REMAIN A RUNNING SORE IN DOMESTIC GERMAN POLITICS FOR  
MONTHS TO COME. THE OPPOSITION ALSO DRUBBED THE GOVERN-  
MENT FOR SAYING TOO LITTLE ABOUT THE COMMUNIST MENACE  
(IN THE GDR, EASTERN EUROPE, AND ELSEWHERE), AND FOR  
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FAILING TO BRING ABOUT A TRUE ECONOMIC RECOVERY. A  
SECONDARY ISSUE IN MOST SPEECHES CONCERNED THE MBFR  
REMARKS WHICH WILLY BRANDT HAD EARLIER MADE:  
THE CDU/CSU ACCUSED BRANDT OF UNDERMINING THE NATO  
POSITION, WHILE THE COALITION SPEAKERS -- WITH VARIOUS  
ACCENTS -- DENIED THAT FRG POLICY ON MBFR HAS CHANGED  
OR THAT BRANDT HAD SAID ANYTHING THAT DIFFERS FROM  
CURRENT NATO STRATEGY.

4. OPPOSITION REMARKS. THE CDU/CSU BORE IN ON NUMER-  
OUS POINTS IN THE POLICY STATEMENTS.

A. KOHL SPOKE FIRST, MAKING HIS MAIDEN SPEECH  
AS CDU/CSU FRAKTION LEADER IN THE BUNDESTAG. HE GAVE A  
GOOD, BUT NOT A STIRRING, ACCOUNT, AND HE DREW HEAVY  
APPLAUSE WHEN HE ATTACKED CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT FOR THE  
GOVERNMENT'S RECENT PLAN TO DEFER THE PROMISED HIKE IN  
SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS. KOHL PORTRAYED A COALITION

OF TIRED -- AND IN SOME CASES, DECEITFUL -- MEN, OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE. HE DECLARED THAT THE LENGTHY COALITION NEGOTIATIONS HAD PRODUCED A FEEBLE POLICY STATEMENT WHICH ONLY CONFIRMED THE SPD AND FDP DIFFERENCES -- A POINT TO WHICH OTHER CDU/CSU SPEAKERS SELDOM RETURNED. KOHL SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE STATEMENT FOR SAYING TOO LITTLE ABOUT EUROPEAN UNION, EVENTS IN THE GDR, AND THE ECONOMIC DOLDRUMS. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NEED

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O R 201553Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4178  
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ASSISTANCE FROM THE CDU/CSU IN MEETING THE ECONOMIC  
AND SECURITY  
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PROBLEMS AHEAD, AND HE PLEDGED TO PROVIDE SUCH HELP  
PROVIDED THE GOVERNMENT BRINGS THE OPPOSITION INTO THE  
PICTURE IN A TIMELY WAY.

B. STRAUSS GAVE A BRAVURA PERFORMANCE WHICH  
LACKED, HOWEVER, CONFRONTATIONAL TONES. HE MADE A POINT  
OF EMPHASIZING HIS AGREEMENT WITH KOHL, AND THE  
COMMONALITY OF CDU AND CSU POSITIONS. IN TYPICAL  
FASHION, STRAUSS LACED HIS SPEECH WITH GRAPHIC META-  
PHOR AND WIT, NEEDLING SCHMIDT FOR NO LONGER BEING THE  
"CAN-DO" MAN AND TURNING SPD BACK-BENCH INTERPELLATIONS  
TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE. STRAUSS DREW HIS MAIN BEAD ON  
THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL SECURITY FINANCING. HE ACCUSED  
THE GOVERNMENT OF FALLING VICTIM TO ITS OWN PROPAGANDA  
RE ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AND HE REGRETTED THAT THE POLICY  
STATEMENT HAD NOT ELABORATED ON THE NEED FOR MORE  
INVESTMENT TO CREATE JOBS. STRAUSS ECHOED KOHL'S  
WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN MEETING THE  
BIG PROBLEMS, AND SAID THAT THE CDU/CSU WILL SUPPORT  
A VAT RISE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS. AFTER DISPOSING  
OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ISSUES, THE BAVARIAN SWEEP  
ACROSS THE WHOLE POLICY STATEMENT, ATTACKING IT  
ON POINTS OF SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY AS WELL. HE  
DEPLORED THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO SAY MORE ABOUT THE  
HARSH FACTS OF LIFE IN THE GDR AND EASTERN EUROPE, OR  
WHETHER THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION WILL BE LOCATED IN  
BERLIN.

C. FORMER CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE BARZEL  
GAVE ONE OF THE BRIEFEST SPEECHES OF THE DAY. HE  
BRANDED THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT AN "ADMINIS-  
TRATIVE REVIEW WITH NO PERSPECTIVE," AND HE CLAIMED  
THAT THIS LACK OF A GENERAL FRAMEWORK HAD LED TO THE  
RECENT SOCIAL SECURITY DEBACLE AND TO GROWING UNEASE  
IN THE POPULATION. BARZEL ALSO CRITICIZED THE  
GOVERNMENT FOR SAYING TOO LITTLE ABOUT THE STATE OF THE

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GERMAN NATION AND THE COMMUNIST CHALLENGE WHICH  
MENACES WESTERN SECURITY.

5. COALITION REMARKS. SPEAKERS FOR THE COALITION  
BRIEFLY DEFENDED THE POLICY STATEMENT, AND FIRED OFF  
REPEATED SALVOS AGAINST THE CDU/CSU "UNION" IN THE WAKE  
OF THE WILDBAD KREUTH DECISION. STRAUSS WAS THE MOST  
FREQUENT TARGET OF THESE SALVOS.

A. SPD CHAIRMAN BRANDT SPOKE FIRST. HE DEFENDED  
THE SPD'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FDP AND THE "SOLID  
GOVERNMENT PROGRAM," TO WHICH HE PLEDGED FULL  
SUPPORT FROM THE SPD FRAKTION. BRANDT SPELLED OUT THE  
DISHARMONY IN THE CDU/CSU RANKS, REFERRING VARIOUSLY  
TO "THE FORMER UNION," "THE UNIONS," ETC. HE SAID THAT  
KOHLE'S ADDRESS HAD MERELY CLOTHED WEAK IDEAS IN STRONG  
LANGUAGE. HE TOOK STRAUSS EVEN MORE TO TASK FOR PANIC-  
MONGERING, PARTICULARLY OVER THE SOCIAL SECURITY  
SYSTEM. BRANDT DEFENDED THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF  
THIS LATTER PROBLEM, AND PAID HOMAGE TO THE CONTRI-  
BUTION BY FORMER LABOR MINISTER WALTER ARENDT. HE  
ENDED ON THE HIGH PLANE, APPEALING TO THE CDU/CSU TO  
AVOID A "PARLIAMENTARY CIVIL WAR" AND TO WORK WITH THE  
GOVERNMENT IN SEEKING CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE  
PROBLEMS AHEAD.

B. SPD FRAKTION LEADER WEHNER GAVE A BRIEF,

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CRISP ANSWER TO STRAUSS. HE DRUBBED THE CDU/CSU FOR  
FAILING TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY  
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STATEMENT. WEHNER DECLARED THAT THE CDU/CSU BEARS  
JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROBLEM  
BECAUSE IT -- INCLUDING STRAUSS -- HAD SUPPORTED EAR-  
LIER INCREASES IN PAYMENTS UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

C. FDP SPEAKERS -- FRAKTION LEADER MISCHNICK,  
DEPUTY FLOOR LEADER HOPPE, AND FOREIGN MINISTER  
GENSCHER -- MAINLY DEFENDED THE DETENTE AND SOCIAL  
SECURITY POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT. PERHAPS BY  
DESIGN, THEY WERE NOT THE STARS OF THE DAY. MISCHNICK  
AND HOPPE TRIED TO WIDEN THE CHINKS IN THE CDU/CSU  
ARMOR, AND ACCUSED THE UNION OF SEEKING HEADLINES  
RATHER THAN DEBATE. AS THE LAST SPEAKER, GENSCHER  
DWELT MAINLY ON THE MBFR CONTROVERSY WHICH HAD SEVERAL  
TIMES ARISEN IN INTERPELLATIONS FROM THE CDU/CSU.  
IN BRIEF, GENSCHER SAID THAT FRG POLICY ON MBFR HAS NOT  
CHANGED AND REMAINS CONSONANT WITH NATO STRATEGY.

D. SCHMIDT DID NOT SPEAK UNTIL LATE IN THE  
AFTERNOON. HE REBUTTED A NUMBER OF OPPOSITION  
CHARGES -- ON PENSIONS, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND  
DEFENSE -- AND MADE AN IMPASSIONED CHALLENGE TO THE  
CDU/CSU TO COME UP WITH BETTER SOLUTIONS OR  
HOLD THEIR TONGUE. SCHMIDT WORKED OVER

THE THEME OF DISUNITY IN THE CDU/CSU RANKS, POINTING OUT NUMEROUS DISCREPANCIES IN ARGUMENTS BY KOHL, STRAUSS AND BARZEL. HE ALSO FOLLOWED HIS ELECTION-CAMPAIGN TACTIC OF PLAYING UP STRAUSS AT KOHL'S EXPENSE: HE REFERRED TO STRAUSS QUITE OFTEN, MENTIONING KOHL BUT SELDOM AND THEN WITH THE HUMBLE TITLE "MR. DEPUTY KOHL."

6. COMMENT: NONE OF THE SPEAKERS SHOWED A DESIRE TO PROLONG THE DEBATE OR TO RESUME IT IN THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS. ALL PARTIES CAN NOW LOOK FORWARD TO A LENGTHY RESPITE IN WHICH TO RECOVER FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE RECENT PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE BESET THEM. FRIDAY'S EXCHANGE MADE IT PLAIN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE ROUGH GOING IN THE NEW BUNDESTAG. THE OPPOSITION, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT UNITED AND BUOYED BY THE COALITION'S PROBLEMS OVER SOCIAL SECURITY AND BY THE NARROWNESS OF SCHMIDT'S REELECTION, SHOWS CONFIDENCE IN ITS ABILITY TO EXPLOIT FAILURES AND WEAKNESSES IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. OF THESE, THE MOST LIKELY ISSUES FOR NEXT MONTH'S DEBATE ARE THE ONGOING SOCIAL SECURITY DILEMMA AND -- TO A LESSER DEGREE -- THE CONTROVERSY OVER MBFR. END COMMENT.  
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